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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/868,680	08/20/2001	Klaus Pfaffelhuber	MUE-0002	3010

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EXAMINER

LOCKETT, KIMBERLY R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2837

DATE MAILED: 09/26/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/868,680

Applicant(s)

PFAFFELHUBER ET AL.

Examiner

Kim R. Lockett

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-35 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The subject matter of this application admits of illustration by a drawing to facilitate understanding of the invention. Applicant is required to furnish a drawing under 37 CFR 1.81. No new matter may be introduced in the required drawing.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The phrase "and/or" fails to specifically claim the applicant's invention and renders the claim indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1, 2, 29, 33, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nomura et al.

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Nomura et al discloses the sounding shielding element for protection from the propagation of sound from a noise area of a room comprising at least one layer with a plurality of small perforations formed in the layer wherein the average diameter or width ranges between .001 and 2mm and a hole/surface ratio ranges between .001 and 20%. Nomura et al also discloses that his material is used to cover sound generating structural parts.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 3, 5-10, 13, 15, 16, 30, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomura et al in view of Flocke et al.

Nomura et al discloses the sounding shielding element for protection from the propagation of sound from a noise area of a auto ceiling panel (claims 15 and 16) comprising at least one layer with a plurality of small perforations formed in the layer wherein the average diameter or width ranges between .001 and 2mm and a hole/surface ratio ranges between .001 and 20%. Nomura et al also discloses that his material is used to cover sound generating structural parts.

Nomura et al does not disclose the use of a specific width.

Flocke et al discloses the use of a sound absorbing wall with specific widths (column 2, lines 48-68).

Regarding claims 7-9 Nomura et al discloses the use of a panel that is three-dimensional and is molded from synthetic material.

Flocke et al also discloses the use of an aluminum plate (column 5, lines 15-20).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the sound shielding element as taught by Nomura et al with the specific widths as taught Flocke et al in order to provide an efficient means of noise absorption.

Regarding claims 30 and 31, Flocke et al discloses a panel formed from woven fiber and impregnating a textile tissue with a thermoplastic material (column 2, lines 39-46).

7. Claims 17-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomura et al in view of Flocke et al and Van Lighten.

Nomura et al and Flocke et al do not disclose of the specific uses of their noise absorbing panel.

Van Lighten discloses the use of a sound absorbing panel. Van Lighten also discloses that sound absorbing panels used in door panels and vehicle components (column 6, lines 20-25). Van Lighten also discloses that sound absorbing panels used in wheel casings and bonnets are well known in the art (column 1, line 25-30). Van

Lighten also discloses that sound absorbing panels used in tubes (column 2, lines 16-33) and engines (column 1, lines 13-15).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device Normura with the widths as taught by Flocke et al since Van Lighten teaches that it is well known in the art to use sound absorbing panel to help with noise absorption in different elements.

8. Claims 34 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nomura et al in view of Flocke et al and Hiers et al.

Nomura et al in view of Flocke et al do not disclose the use of needles to make holes in the panels.

Hiers et al discloses the use of needles to make holes in the panels (column 10, lines 30-42).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device Normura with the widths as taught by Flocke et al and the technique as used by Hiers et al in order to provide sound abatement.

2. Any inquiry of a **general nature or relating to the status of this application or filed papers** should be directed to the **Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956**.

Papers related to this application may be submitted to Group 2800 by facsimile transmission. Papers should be faxed to Group 2800 via the PTO 2800 Fax Center

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located at Crystal Plaza 4. The faxing of such papers must conform with the notice published in the Official Gazette, 1096 O.G. 30 (November 15, 1989). The Group 2800 CP 4 Fax Center number is (703) 308-77(22 or 24). Fax numbers that provide an auto-reply fax receipt are: for before finals (703) 872-9318 and after finals (703) 872-9319.

For assistance in **Patent procedure, fees or general Patent questions** calls should be directed to the **Patents Assistance Center (PAC)** whose **telephone number is 800-786-9199**. Assistance is also available on the Internet at www.uspto.gov.

For requesting **copies of Cited Art, Office Actions or the like, or General Problem solving**, calls should be directed to the **TC 2800 Customer Service Office** whose telephone number is **703-306-3329** or by fax at **703-306-5515**.

Any inquiry concerning **this communication or earlier communications from the examiner** should be directed to **Kim Lockett** whose **telephone number is (703) 308-7615**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Nappi, can be reached on (703) 308-3370.


Kim Lockett
Patent Examiner
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